

TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS

T★A★P★S[®]

Comfort and Support Since 1994

MAGAZINE

FOR THE LOVED ONES OF THOSE WHO SERVED & DIED



VOLUME 17 • ISSUE 2

TAPS Magazine is dedicated to the brave men and women who died while serving in the Armed Forces, and to their survivors. The magazine is written by surviving family members, friends, and care-giving professionals. We hope you will find comfort, support, information, inspiration, and a sense of connection within its pages.

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★ **About TAPS Magazine** ★

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) is a national nonprofit 501(c)3 Veterans Service Organization which publishes TAPS Magazine in furtherance of its mission to provide support services to the survivors of servicemembers who have died while serving.

TAPS Magazine is published quarterly and sent free of charge to survivors, their friends and family, servicemembers, and professionals who work with U.S. military survivors.



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Comfort and Support Since 1994

TAPS offers immediate and long-term emotional help, hope, and healing to anyone grieving the death of a loved one in military service to America, regardless of their relationship to the deceased or the circumstances of the death.

**TAPS is here for you
24 hours a day
7 days a week**

**Call us at 800-959-TAPS
Or visit us at www.taps.org**



SUPPORTS the bereaved survivor through a network of Peer Mentors. Mentors are trained volunteers who have also lost a loved one in the Armed Forces and are now standing ready to reach out and support others.

PROVIDES a national toll-free help and information line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 800-959-TAPS (8277). Support is available from leading experts in the field of grief and trauma.

HOSTS the TAPS Online Community of survivors, providing secure chat rooms, message boards, peer group discussion sites, and an extensive website at www.taps.org.

SPONSORS Military Survivor Seminars for adults and Good Grief Camps for young survivors in locations across America, giving survivors the opportunity to share, grow, and help each other heal.

CONNECTS families to resources in their local communities and provides grief and trauma resources and information.



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COVER PHOTO PROVIDED BY
Steve Maloney

TAPS Good Grief Camp Participants



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Let Us Hear From You



We want to know your thoughts, perspectives, and opinions on TAPS programs and publications. Tell us what you think, send ideas for future topics, or submit an article. Submission Guidelines can be found online at www.taps.org. Your TAPS family is waiting to hear from you. ✧

National Military Survivor Seminar

I am so fortunate to have found a group like TAPS. It really helped being around other people who know exactly what I'm going through and are still a viable support system. Thank you for an amazing weekend.

Samantha Justesen, Oregon
Surviving sister of
PFC Anthony Justesen

Finding a family in TAPS

Attending the TAPS seminar was the hardest, best thing I have done! There was much love and understanding. I shed a lot of tears and embraced a lot of emotion that I was trying to ignore. I realized we were there for each other and as I listened I gained so much; just to hear another's story and be able to rejoice in our soldier and feel proud in their service, something not easily done outside of our TAPS family. I found TAPS by accident while searching on the internet for anything to help me when my son died. I sent that first message on the chat line and was immediately contacted with understanding and hope and I knew I had found a safe home where real help was available. A true lifeline when I was sinking into despair. Thank you is not enough. Thank God for the TAPS family!

Debra Lafon, Oklahoma
Surviving mom of
Staff Sergeant Zachary Darras

TAPS Resource Kit

A few weeks ago I received a packet in the mail from you with some information and booklets. As I read the pocket flip book about grief [TAPS Survivor Guide] I thought, "Wow, they wrote that about me! I went through all of that." It's good to know that now, almost 6 years later, I hadn't gone crazy. Thanks so much!

Amanda Howard, South Carolina
Surviving sister of
Sergeant Anthony Jones

Email Messages

Thank you for all you do. It seems your words of comfort know when to find me. [Valentine's Day email message] I really needed a shoulder yesterday but I stayed busy. I didn't go online all day. I wish I had; I would have found this note from TAPS. I found it this morning. I was still feeling down and your poem made me feel better. It's been 300 days since my husband passed and each day feels longer than the one before. But when I receive something in the mail or email from you all, it helps me so much. Thank you for being there for all of us who have lost loved ones.

Alma Honczaruk, North Carolina
Surviving spouse of
Gunnery Sergeant Ted Honczaruk

TAPS Survivor Outreach

I am one of the newest members to the TAPS organization. I had a wonderful conversation with a member of your Adult Survivor Outreach yesterday. She contacted me when I needed her most. It is great that we have somewhere to go and people to listen to us and hear what we are saying. Thank you, thank you! I am looking forward to attending one of your seminars in the future; right now the Army has us very busy with ceremonies.

Amy Moore, New Jersey
Surviving mom of
Specialist Benjamin Moore

Sibling Retreat

I cannot say thanks enough to TAPS for the sibling retreat. Meeting people and sharing stories has helped me in so many ways. I was so alone with my grief before, and now I have made lifelong friends and I know I don't have to be alone. This was my first event but will not be my last, the work you do is incredible! THANK YOU!!!!

Rebecca Wissinger, Texas
Surviving sister of
PFC Richard Wissinger, Jr.



editor@taps.org



From the Public Affairs Officer

Dear TAPS Family,

Last Sunday I took my baby girl to visit her Uncle Chris's gravesite at Arlington National Cemetery. I set her on a blanket next to his headstone, and she reached out with one little hand to touch his flowers as I took a photo of her.

Chris died almost three years before she was born. She will never know him in person. She will never know what our family was like before he died. Nor will she know what kind of people we were back then.

Sometimes what we've lost threatens to overwhelm what we have. Chris left us a legacy of service, faith, hope, and love. It would be a tragedy for her to never know him. Or for his name to never be

spoken because we are all afraid of causing each other too much pain. Or for all of her memories related to him to be a cold stone in a cemetery.

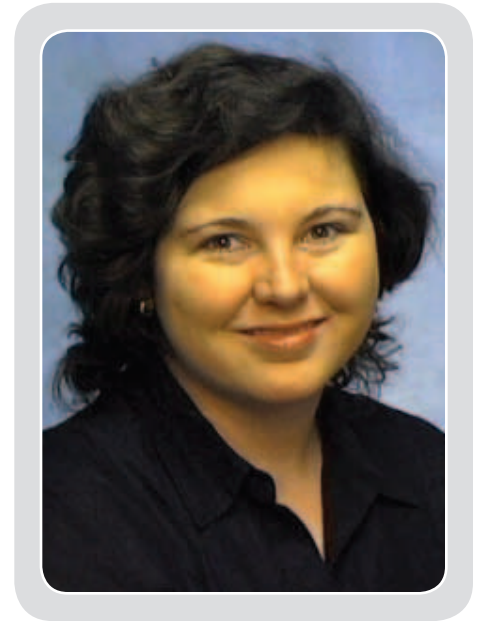
The best way I know how to make his memory come alive for her as she grows up is through storytelling. So even though she is too small to understand, I tell her stories about Uncle Chris. How he disliked broccoli. How much he loved fireworks. How knobby his fingers were. How smart he was. How good he was at playing practical jokes. How he gave me my family nickname.

Sometimes the stories make me a little weepy, but I know I need to share them.

I figure I am practicing now for when she really does understand. Someday she will remember these stories, and his personality will shine through.

Storytelling has given me more of an appreciation for recording the past. My project to complete a scrapbook of my brother's time in the military sputtered to a halt when my daughter arrived. I recently revived it and am charging toward completion. I started a project to scan and record our family photos, too. And in a major milestone for me, I recently began a scrapbook with new photos showing my daughter and her life - her life that includes Uncle Chris.

There are many people in our lives who need to hear stories of our loved ones: our families first and fore-



most, but our friends as well. Sometimes they need to hear us talk about the person who died, so they know it's okay to mention his or her name.

With less than one percent of the US population serving in the military or impacted by the current wars, the public needs to hear us share our stories, too. They need to know about the amazing people all our loved ones were. And they need to hear not just stories of loss and sacrifice, but stories of hope and resiliency.

One way we can share our loved ones is through a special website TAPS created for the Give a Thousand Thanks project. You can find it online at giveathousandthanks.org. It's a place where people can post thank you messages for the families of our fallen military and honor the service and sacrifice our loved ones made. This summer, if you find a little spare time in your schedule, consider posting a written, photo, or video tribute to your loved one.

Don't let their stories go untold. ★

Ami Neiberger-Miller
★ Public Affairs Officer ★





Star Light, Star Bright

By Darcie D. Sims, PhD, CHT, CT, GMS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Star light,

Star bright,

First star

I see tonight,

I wish I may,

I wish I might,

Have the wish

I wish tonight.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Did you ever wish upon a star? Did you ever stand outside, on a summer night and feel the soft darkness enfold you like black velvet, the gentle night breeze kissing your cheeks, the grass tickling your bare toes? Did you ever lie on your back, looking at the starry quilt tossed over the heavens? Did you ever see a shooting star and wonder where it came from and where it was going? Did you ever search for a special star and wish on it? Did you ever believe in wishes?

I did.

Life was simple then. Made up of day and night, light and dark, black and white, yes or no. There weren't as many maybe's then. There weren't so many

questions left unanswered or sentences left unfinished or songs never sung.

Love came easily in the summertime of my life. It was warm and gentle, nurtured by the never-ending sun's light and blessed by a moon that always cast a silvery reflection on wherever I happened to be. Dreams came easily then and so did laughter. Can you remember those times in your life when the summers were without end, and you ran free with the wind?

We flew kites and launched balloons. We collected grasshoppers and chased fireflies. We tried to capture the raindrops and make the popsicles last a little longer. We tried to find the end of the rainbow, and once I even managed to stand in its light! I thought I was blessed. I had been touched by the rainbow's hues!

Dreams came easily, too, and we were young and foolish and careless in the summertime of our life. We made dandelion crowns and wove daisy chains. We toasted in the summer sun, turning over and over, leaving tan lines and sun-streaked hair. It was everything we dreamed of, an endless wave, an endless river, an endless day only to be blessed even more by the gentle darkness of star-dusted summer nights.

Life was full and rich, although we were not. But we were filled with love and dreams and hope. We believed, then.

Joy came into our lives, just as it did into yours. And we thought our hearts would burst with the magic. We caught the sunlight and gave it a name. We fell in love with love. And love fell in love



with us. It was a perfect time, at least in the dream place.

Everyone has had a dream place, even if you can't remember it now. You once walked where angels trod, and their footprints left joy in your heart. We grew secure and content and settled into the porch swing to while away the summer nights. We played Kick-the-Can and held those fireflies in our hands, wondering how they glowed and flickered and flashed. Life once was whole and complete, and summertime seemed endless.

But then I learned you can't catch a rainbow reflected on the wall and expect it to stay. You can't hold a butterfly too tightly and set it free again. The dream came to pieces and we were shattered. No longer a dream, it became a nightmare and the sun grew cold and the music died. I no longer looked at the stars. There was no rainbow for me anymore. All the dreams were broken and the pieces were scattered.

It was a long time before I realized the sun still got up every day and so did I. It was a long time before I understood that while my life's fabric had been damaged terribly, it was still being woven, even if the threads were twisted and broken. One day became one week, and then one month, and then one year, and now many years.

One night I again looked up into the heavens and discovered the stars were still there. And the moon was still there, too! Oh my, how long had it been since my spirit felt like dancing in the moonlight? Too long. Much too long. And now my bones ache sometimes. Sometimes my step is a bit slower and sometimes I can still feel the pain.

But I've begun to notice that the broken places have started to heal. The fabric is

mending, perhaps with tiny stitches and a bit lumpy; but I am learning to weave again. And the stars are still shining. I guess they never stopped. I just stopped looking...

And now, as summer reigns again, I realize that many summers have come and gone, not just one. It's been fall and winter and spring, too. Many times over. All without my direction, effort, or concern. Someone else turned the season's wheel, and the days moved on and on. I hadn't been in charge after all! Someone else's hand had been holding mine all this time.

And now—when I dare—I can find my special star. There are more stars whose names I know and I find it comforting to know I am blanketed by a starry quilt made of love and memories.

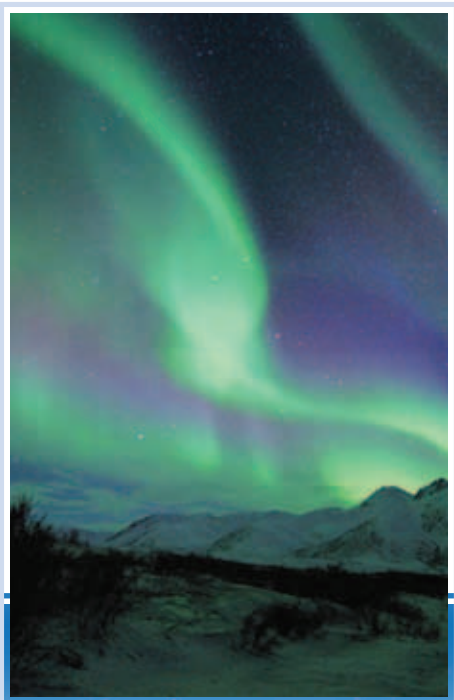
I did get my wish! It just didn't stay long enough. But I choose now to remember the light, not dwell in the darkness. Once I stood in the starlight and was granted happiness. Now there is a star for each miracle I have known.

Look skyward tonight and find your special star. And instead of embracing the emptiness, cherish the space that love always fills. We didn't lose the love just because the light went out on this earthly plane.

No light that was born in love can ever be extinguished. *



*Star light,
Star bright,
First star
I see tonight,
I wish I may,
I wish I might,
Remember the love
And hold the light.
Twinkle, twinkle,
Little star,
Now I know
Just who you are!*



About the Author



Darcie Sims is a bereaved parent and child, long time friend and keynote speaker for TAPS, author, thanatologist, pastoral bereavement specialist, licensed psychotherapist, and president and co-founder of GRIEF, Inc.

For more information visit:
www.griefinc.com

A Father's Grief

Finding a game plan to honor your loss

By Lee Vincent, surviving father of Second Lieutenant Lara Vincent

What's the first male response to trouble? Get in there and do something right away, of course. But you can't do anything about a warrior who is already dead, which leads to the next natural, manly move: write off the loss and move on to something else. This is how men have always coped with reality and how we survived and got our families sheltered and fed, after all. But when we are blindsided with a heartbreaking, stunning loss, these traditional ways will backfire and only aggravate our pain sooner or later - even years later.

Men who are confronted with the death of a son or a daughter need to realize as soon as possible that our usual male tendencies may not be all we need. The fact of death itself should tell us that the normal ways of coping with life aren't enough. My lifelong ways of handling trouble would lead me into one of two mistakes: either pretending I'm completely okay or pretending that my young Marine didn't permanently own a huge piece of my heart. Both would be lies - lies to myself and to everyone who knows me.

When the Marines came to tell us that our daughter, the glorious Lieutenant Lara "Vinny" Vincent, had died in a plane crash, my wife Susan and I had to drive 100 miles to tell our son. In those two hours of seclusion in our Suburban, I saw that I needed a plan like I had never needed one before. We would take control of the situation and use every mental resource we could think of.

We would stay a step ahead of all the sad rituals and extremely uncomfortable events to come. Miraculously, Susan and I were able to make these kinds of decisions in the first days and weeks of our catastrophe. But it is never too late for those who have long since buried your beloved warrior to find some peace, some small but priceless joy, to take action, and begin to think new thoughts.

DRIVE AWAY BLAME.

My Vinny died in peacetime, when most of the military deaths seem to come from highway accidents, training incidents, and airplane crashes. Military airplanes are more complicated than civilian aircraft. Pilots must constantly practice, and mishaps are just part of reality. Every weekend multitudes of servicemen and women are driving great distances to see loved ones and find recreation. Then they rush back

hundreds of miles to meet their curfew. Almost every weekend someone dies.

A dozen times a day you may think you "lost" the 20 years of work and emotion you invested in your son or daughter. We are bombarded with regrets of someone's heedless mistake, of the apparent pointlessness or futility of an accident or homicide. We can't always keep away those thoughts of what should have, would have, could have been. Yet these thoughts don't do anything for us but increase our pain. Instead, we must forever know there is no futility or shame in the death of one whose living had so much merit. We must never stain their merit with negative judgments. And we must never let our sorrow over what they could have been take away any of the glory of what they already were.



SECOND LIEUTENANT LARA VINCENT Photo courtesy of the Vincent family.

**BE PROUD OF YOUR
LOVED ONE.**

Before Marine Officer Candidates School, my daughter went through basic training as a private at Parris Island Recruit Depot. She wanted to learn the life of the enlisted Marines she would someday be protecting. I realized at the graduation that every private who completed that arduous training, regardless of class rank, had already achieved something amazing, something far beyond the rest of America's youth.

We have the right to spend every day of our lives showing our pride in our loved ones, regardless of the details of the death itself. Because every one of those we love had already risen far above the rest of our society in character, courage, honor, and ability. And not an atom of their achievement can ever be lost or taken back. We all know this. Someone has surely told you this truth already.

Start exercising your pride. No matter how long you have been grieving, make a point to hold your chin up in pride for part of every day. Your deceased warrior deserves it. He or she has earned it. If they had lived, they would be proud today of who they are and what they are doing. Now it's our duty to be proud for them.

**MAKE YOUR OWN
CELEBRATIONS.**

There were three separate services in Florida and Massachusetts before we finally buried our Marine's ashes at sea. On the Coast Guard cutter that took us from Woods Hole, Massachusetts to open sea near Martha's Vineyard, we brought along four Episcopal priests, but I gave the homily oration myself, followed by my wife Susan's upbeat celebration of our daughter. Sue ended her words by leading the Marines in a hearty "Oo-rah!"

Since that day, we have done several things to celebrate the amazing life that our Vinny lived. We have planted a tree in her honor near our town's Veterans memorial. A prize fund in our daughter's name was established at Boston University's Marine Science Program where she had been an unforgettable young scientist. Now my wife and I run an ever-expanding specialty plant sale every June that yields a good contribution to the prize fund.

**No matter how long
you have been grieving,
make a point to hold your
chin up in pride for part of
every day.
Your deceased warrior
deserves it. He or she
has earned it.**



Understandably, you may not have done all these things yet. But you can. You can still hold a memorial event at your church or club any time, any year. Then you can speak your own words and say everything you wish you had thought of before.

You can rent a hall and have a party for all of your loved one's friends, set up a picture display, and get them to write their sentiments in a book. Buy two or three inexpensive pocket recorders, so they can dictate their memories. You can turn the past into some kind of a future. You can take charge of your grief, even if you can't make it completely go away.

**GET TOGETHER
WITH OTHERS.**

I was amazed at how much better I felt after the several TAPS National Military Survivor Seminar weekends I attended between 1999 and 2010, and I would sure like to have more dads, brothers, and sons join me in the hotel sports bar next May.

Crystal Gateway is a comfortable hotel, very large, with lots of quiet places, a pool, and a gym. You can spend the whole weekend alone with your thoughts in your own little world, if you wish. Or you can take the opportunity to talk, and you might find yourself laughing more than once. In TAPS you are sure to find friendly listeners - others who are pleased to hear about all the things you don't want to talk about at work and in your social circles at home.

My co-workers and my Rotary Club might feel uncomfortable if I pulled out my pictures and started talking again about how fabulous Vinny was and how much I wish I could have a beer with her tonight. But in one of the lounges at our hotel, surrounded by our TAPS family, sharing memories and pains with others is as easy as munching the pretzels. ★

Selecting a Grief Counselor

Part 1 ★ By Stephanie Frogge, MTS

Finding a good mental health professional in the midst of trauma is somewhat akin to trying to find a good plumber in the middle of the night when water is pouring out of a hole in your wall. Your intentions may be clear but summoning the necessary energy, focus, and discernment to be a wise consumer of mental health services may be just too much... especially when you've got your finger in the dike and know it won't take much to bring the whole thing crashing down around your ears.

Intellectually most of us understand that we wouldn't give a decorator free rein in our home or drop off our children at a daycare center without checking qualifications and making sure that we have a shared vision of services to be performed. Yet for many of us finding a counselor—and giving him or her access to our most tender places during perhaps the most difficult time in our lives—is achieved by flipping through the phone

book or going with a recommendation made by a friend.

Finding a counselor takes some work, and then deciding if it's a good match takes even more. However, with a little bit of information about the types of counselors available, you may

be able to narrow your initial search and increase the likelihood of finding a good match right away.

Keep in mind that the mental health professionals who are licensed through their state may be called something a little bit different or may have slightly different requirements from one state to the next, but generally they are similar to the descriptions provided below.

❖ PSYCHIATRIST

A psychiatrist is a physician who completes medical school and then, like other doctors who want to specialize, takes additional training in the field of mental health, in the same way a cardiologist learns more about the heart and a derma-

tologist learns more about skin. Many psychiatrists don't do traditional counseling. They typically assess and diagnose, then work with a psychologist or other type of counselor who provides the counseling service. One advantage to seeking the services of a psychiatrist is that he or she can prescribe medications. Survivors who may be helped through the short-term use of medications may find the services of a psychiatrist to be more efficient than going to another type of counselor who then has to work through a doctor to get a prescription. Survivors who are already dealing with mental health challenges may find the expertise of a psychiatrist to be helpful in terms of coordinating mental health interventions. On the other hand, some survivors find the traditional medical model—something's wrong with the body that needs to be fixed—to be an unsatisfactory characterization of bereavement and trauma.

❖ PSYCHOLOGIST

A psychologist is a mental health professional who has earned a PhD in the mental health field. Their title is that of doctor although their training is not in medicine, so they are not physicians. In addition to their PhD, they have had a period of practice under the supervision of a more experienced psychologist and have passed a licensing test. Psychologists are trained to assess and diagnosis problems and to intervene



*Finding a counselor ~
and giving him or her
access to our most
tender places during
perhaps the most
difficult time of our lives
~ takes some work.*

using techniques and methods that result in behavior change and improved quality of life. Because of their expertise in testing and diagnosis, survivors who may be dealing with issues besides those related to the recent death of a loved one may find the long-range view of a psychologist to be especially useful. Psychologists can help their clients better understand how past issues are influencing present issues and, with those insights, how behaviors can be adapted. However, for those who only want to focus on a specific issue and don't want or don't need a broader contextual analysis, a licensed counselor or social worker may be a good choice.

❖ LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR

A licensed professional counselor (LPC) has at least a master's degree in counseling or a related field, has passed a state licensing exam, and has had several hundred hours of clinical experience under another LPC. The licensed professional counselor's primary focus is on the individual and the issues that are causing them problems in their life with an eye toward improved functioning.

❖ LICENSED MARRIAGE & FAMILY THERAPIST

The licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT) has received training and licensing similar to that of an LPC but also has specific training and expertise in couples and family dynamics. That focus may be of particular interest to survivors who want to seek counseling as a family. Similar to social workers, LMFTs seek to identify ways in which the presenting issue is manifesting itself in the client's relationships and environment.

❖ LICENSED CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER

A licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) has an advanced degree in social work including an internship experience, several hundred hours of supervised practice, and an advanced licensing exam. It's been said

Giving some thought to what you envision the counseling process achieving may help you narrow down your search.

that a counselor changes a person from the inside out and a social worker from the outside in. That may be a bit simplistic, but a social worker is specially trained to look at individuals within the broader context of their environment: their families, their professions, their daily activities, and their interactions with other people. Although the client's specific issue will be the focus of intervention, the LCSW is trained to identify ways in which that issue is manifesting itself in other circumstances and relationships. For survivors who want to focus primarily on a particular issue, such as grieving the loss of a loved one, an LCSW may be a good choice. Those who want to work on broader issues, such as how a recent loss may be spotlighting unresolved issues from the past, may find an LPC or psychologist a more appropriate mental health partner.

❖ LICENSED MASTER LEVEL SOCIAL WORKER

This provider has earned a master's degree in social work, including the internship, and has taken an initial exam. They may or may not be on their way to becoming an LCSW, but their clinical work is done under supervision. That doesn't mean that a supervisor will sit in on your counseling session, merely that the LMLSW will consult and seek guidance from his or her supervisor on a regular basis.

❖ WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Clearly there is a lot more to accessing mental health services than just "seeing a counselor." However, by giving some thought to what you envision the counseling process achieving, some types of mental health professionals may seem like

the more obvious choice and help you narrow down your search. But your work isn't finished once you've scheduled an appointment. See Part 2 in our next issue for help in making sure that you are receiving the support you need. ★

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

For help connecting with a grief counselor in your local area, call TAPS at 800-959-TAPS(8277) or email jessica@taps.org. TAPS connects you with individual counseling through programs that offer free, unlimited counseling such as the VA's Vet Centers and Give an Hour.

About the Author



Stephanie holds a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Texas Christian University and a master's in Theological Studies from Brite Divinity School. She is the assistant director of the Institute for Restorative Justice & Restorative Dialogue at the University of Texas at Austin. Stephanie has more than thirty years of experience in the area of trauma response. She is the former National Director of Victim Services at Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and served two years as the Director of Peer Support Services for TAPS.

Anniversary Blues

Handling the Most Dreaded Day of the Year

By Betsy Beard, surviving mom of Specialist Bradley Beard

The date is engraved on my heart. The awful day he died. Every year that date comes around again on the calendar, and for lack of anything better, we call it the anniversary of his death. It seems so wrong; anniversaries should be for celebrating a joyous occasion, not for acknowledging a death. But in the six and a half years since Brad's death, we have never come up with an acceptable alternate name.

He had a birthday, so I suppose we could call it his death day. But I can't seem to do that; it sounds too raw, too unvarnished. Some call it an angel day and others refer to it as a memory day, personal memorial day, or deployment to heaven. Some people refuse to call it anything at all. No matter what we decide to call it, it hurts.

As the date approaches I feel listless, dreading the date on the calendar that signifies the loss of our family as we knew and loved it. The world presses down on me and I feel lost, distracted, touchy, dysfunctional. More than anything I feel inexpressibly sad.

I think that even if we didn't have calendars, we would still know that the date was near at hand. Every one of our physical senses can file information in our memory banks, some better than others. So on that bleak day in 2004, even though we felt shattered and numbed by the notification, our senses continued to record and catalog our external surroundings, mingling those memories with our emotional devastation.

Every year since then, tiny seasonal cues work surreptitiously in our brains, letting us know the dreaded day is approaching. The sunlight has a certain slant. The air smells a certain way. The temperature and

humidity remind me of this. The leaves and sky looked like that. And once again my heart is heavy.

Those who study death and dying have a name for this phenomenon: anniversary reaction. As we are drawn back in time to the painful memories, the days can feel empty once again and the nights troubled. We might feel anxious for several weeks before the date or for some time

afterward (or both).

At any rate, the anniversary reaction is a normal occurrence. We all seem to experience it to some degree. So what can we do to make it through the day? Above all, we can recognize and acknowledge that it can be a difficult time. We can lower our expectations of our capabilities and be gentle with ourselves. We can plan ahead to avoid stressful situations and



As we are drawn back in time to the painful memories, the days can feel empty once again and the nights troubled.

prepare in advance what to do on that day. Because we all grieve differently, it's a good idea to discuss the options with other family members. Being flexible to accommodate others' wishes may be difficult, but helps everyone to feel included. Talking about the day and having a tentative idea of what would work for all involved can alleviate some of the stress and dread.

Think about the coping mechanisms that have worked for you so far and try to incorporate some of them at this harder than usual time. As with other aspects of our grieving journey, trial and error is a valid way of determining what works. Plan to do what you think will help you the most. If it doesn't bring comfort, try something different next time. And if the day arrives and the plan doesn't feel right, feel free to change your mind and decide to do something else.

Rather than try to ignore one of the most important people in your life, it can be helpful to focus on the extraordinary lives they lived. Those of us who have endured several anniversary dates have found a number of options for commemorating our loved ones.

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS:

1 Plan a memorial ceremony. The creation of memorial rituals can be part of the ongoing healing process, and these remembrances can take many forms. In the first weeks of loss, rituals helped to carry us through the pain-filled days and brought some meaning and stability to our otherwise chaotic lives.

2 Light a candle in honor of your loved one. In the Jewish tradition it is customary to light a special candle that burns for 24 hours. The candle is lit on the anniversary date of the death, as well as during the initial mourning period immediately following a death.

3 Take a personal day off work to sleep and rest. Grieving is hard work and takes its toll on your mind,

body, and spirit. Do what you need to do to care for yourself. You will be better able to function in the future when you take time to be kind to yourself.

4 Read letters from others about your loved one. Ask friends and family members to write their memories ahead of time and then gather to read them on the anniversary date.

5 Cook your loved one's favorite meal or special treat and remember how much joy they derived from the time spent together over a favorite dish.

6 Engage in one of your loved one's favorite activities. It could be watching the latest movie, going bowling, boating, gaming, hiking, or even skydiving.

7 Host a fundraising event for something your loved one cared about. Many survivors plan 5K walks, motorcycle rides, book drives, mission trips, or garden tours.

8 Plant a tree or dedicate a bronze plaque or a flagpole (or all three) in honor of your loved one. This provides a tangible link to your loved one and is visible to the world.

9 Visit and tend to the gravesite. Some survivors bring chairs, food, books, and music and spend the day there. One tradition is to scatter rose petals over the grave. Another is to pour their favorite drink there or "share" it with them.

10 Write a letter to your loved one. Say what was left unsaid, or repeat what needs to be said again—that you love them and that your love is for always.

11 Spend time with others looking through family photographs or watching home movies. Honor the good times you shared.

12 Start a new tradition and do something outside of your normal routine: take a walk, watch the sunrise or sunset, volunteer with an organization that helps others.

Anniversaries, in the broadest sense, are days of acknowledging, honoring, and remembering. And part of dealing with our grief is allowing ourselves to remember. Memory helps us to preserve the bond of love we shared as we continue to live our lives.

Whatever you choose to do or not do, try to include something special that will honor your love and confirm your relationship—a relationship that has changed but has not ended. However you observe the day, be gentle with yourself as you find your way toward dealing with the one day of the year that you will probably never forget. *

About the Author



Betsy Beard has served as the editor of *TAPS Magazine* since 2008. She is also a peer mentor, care group facilitator, and workshop presenter for the national seminar. She lives in North Carolina with her husband, Randy. Their lives were forever changed by the death of their only son, Army Specialist Bradley Beard, who was killed in action in Iraq in 2004. In the years since Brad's death, the family has found help, hope, and healing within TAPS.

When Someone You Love Completes Suicide: Opening to the Presence of Your Loss

By Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD

“In every heart there is an inner room, where we can hold our greatest treasures and our deepest pain.”

~ MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

Someone you love has completed suicide. In your heart, you have come to know your deepest pain. To be bereaved literally means to be torn apart. You have a broken heart and your life has been turned upside down.

While it is instinctive to want to run as far away as possible from the overwhelming pain that comes with this loss, you have probably already discovered that even if you try to hide, deny, or self-treat your pain, it is still within you, demanding your attention. In acknowledging the inevitability of the pain and raw suffering that comes with this grief, in coming to understand the need to gently embrace the pain, you (in effect) honor the pain.

The word honor literally means recognizing the value of and respecting. It is not instinctive to see grief that erupts following a suicide death and the need to mourn as something to honor. But I hope you discover, as I have, that to honor your grief is not self-destructive or harmful; it is self-sustaining and life-giving.

You have probably been taught that pain is an indication that something is wrong and that you should find a way to alleviate the

pain. In our culture, the role of pain and suffering is misunderstood. This is particularly true with suicide grief. Because of the stigma and taboo surrounding suicide, many people think you shouldn't talk about it, let alone honor your pain by openly mourning.

In part, this article will encourage you to be present to your multitude of thoughts and feelings, to be with them, for they contain the truth you are searching for, the energy you may be lacking, and the unfolding of your eventual healing.

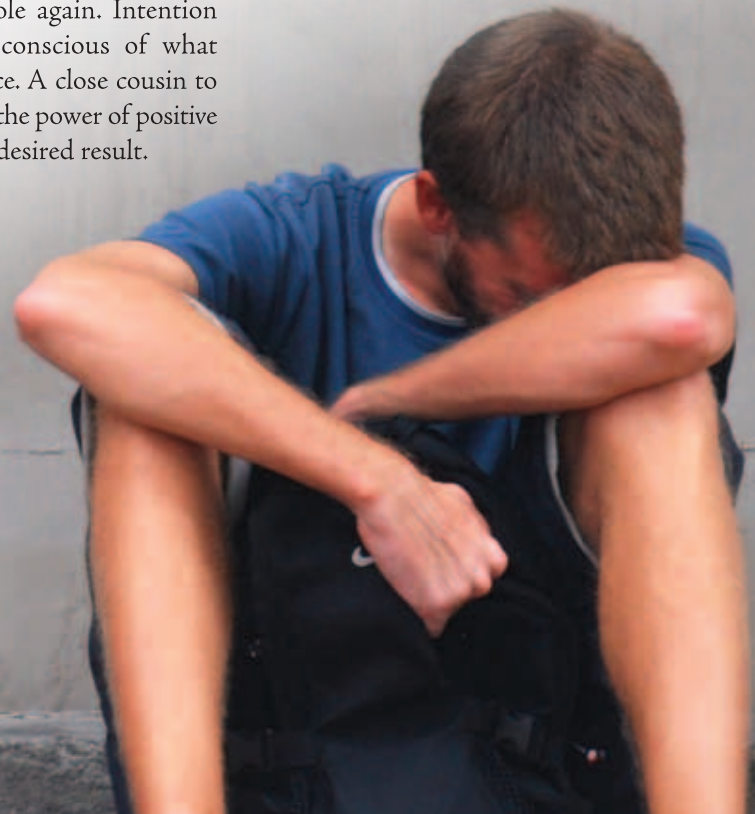
SETTING YOUR INTENTION TO HEAL

It takes a true commitment to heal in your grief. Yes, you are wounded, but with commitment and intention you can and will become whole again. Intention is defined as being conscious of what you want to experience. A close cousin to affirmation, it is using the power of positive thought to produce a desired result.

When you set your intention to heal, you make a true commitment to positively influence the course of your journey. You probably know the cliché, “Time heals all wounds.” Yet time alone does not heal the wounds of grief that come with suicide. I like to remind myself and other survivors that healing waits on welcome, not on time! Healing and integrating this loss into your life demands that you engage actively in the grief journey.

A VITAL DISTINCTION: SHOCK VERSUS DENIAL

Shock, along with elements of denial, is a temporary, healthy response that essentially says, “The reality of the suicide death of someone dear to me is too painful to acknowledge right now. Therefore I refuse



to believe it.” While this is a natural initial reaction to suicide, you will hinder your eventual healing if you stay in long-term denial.

There are various forms of denial that, as a survivor, you must work to break through:

Conscious Denial: This is where you hide the fact that the death was suicide. You may tell people it was a heart attack, murder, or an unexplained sudden death.

Innocent Denial: This is where you hold onto the hope that the findings that ruled the death a suicide were a mistake and will be changed at a later date.

Blame as Denial: This is where you blame someone else for the suicide, thereby denying the choice someone made to take his or her own life.

Pretense and Denial: This is where the unwritten family rule is that you never talk about the death or use the word suicide at any time.

The motivations for these types of denial are multiple and complex. Often people don't even realize they are in denial. So if you discover you have gone beyond shock into some form of prolonged denial, do not shame or ridicule yourself.

But here is the problem: by staying in denial, you miss the opportunity to do the grief work related to your feelings. Until denial is broken through and the pain is experienced, you are on hold and authentic mourning cannot take place.

FACE ANY INAPPROPRIATE EXPECTATIONS

You are at risk for having inappropriate expectations about this death. These expectations result from common societal messages that tell you to be strong in the face of life losses. Invariably, some well-intentioned people around you will urge you to move on, let go, keep your chin

up, and keep busy. Actually, you need to give yourself as much time as you need to mourn, and these kinds of comments hurt you, not help you.

Society often makes mourners feel shame or embarrassment about our feelings of grief, particularly suicide grief. It implies that if you, as a grieving person, openly express your feeling of grief, you are being immature. If your feelings are fairly intense, you may be labeled overly emotional or needy. If your feelings are extremely intense, you may even be referred to as crazy or a pathological mourner.

As a professional grief counselor, I assure you that you are not immature, overly emotional, or crazy. But the societal messages surrounding grief that you may receive are!

If you fear emotions and see them as negative, you will be at risk for crying alone and in private. Yet being secretive with your emotions doesn't integrate your painful feelings of loss; it complicates them. Then even more pain comes from trying to keep the pain secret. You cannot hide your feelings and find renewed meaning in your life. If you are dishonest about your pain, you stay in pain.

GRIEF IS NOT A DISEASE

You have probably already discovered that no quick fix exists for the pain you are enduring. Grief following a suicide is naturally complex, and it is easy to feel overwhelmed. But I promise you that if you can think, feel, and see yourself as an active participant in your healing, you will slowly but surely experience a renewed sense of meaning and purpose in your life.

Grief is not a disease. To be human means coming to know loss as part of your life. While the grief that accompanies suicide is a powerful, life-changing experience, so, too, is your ability to help facilitate your own healing.

I invite you to gently confront the pain of your grief. Be open to the miracle of healing. Integrating the grief that comes with a suicide death requires your willingness. You must already have some willingness or you would not have picked up this article. Follow your willingness and allow it to bless you.

In large part, healing from a suicide death is anchored in a decision to not judge yourself but to love yourself. Grief is a call for love. So if you are judging yourself and where you are in this journey, STOP! When you stop judging the multitude of emotions that come with your grief, you are left with acceptance, and when you have acceptance (or surrender), you have love. Love will lead you into and through the wilderness, to a place where you will come out of the dark and into the light. *

About the Author



Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD, is a noted author, educator, and grief counselor. He serves as Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Colorado and is on the faculty at the University of Colorado Medical School, Department of Family Medicine. Dr. Wolfelt is known for his compassionate philosophy of “companionship” versus “treating” mourners. This article is excerpted from his book *The Wilderness of Suicide Grief: Finding Your Way*, available at bookstores and centerforloss.com.



TAPS VOLUNTEER

★ Ann Lambert ★

Volunteers are a very important part of the TAPS family. We are grateful for the countless hours our volunteers donate and the part they play in supporting the TAPS mission. Volunteers, we salute you!

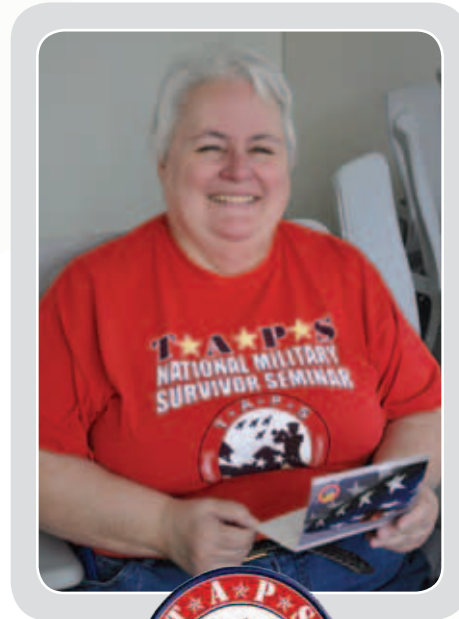
The year was 2006. I had recently moved to the DC area and joined a knitting group as a way to meet new people. At the April meeting, one of the knitters announced she was looking for volunteers to teach knitting to military survivors on behalf of an organization called TAPS. So I raised my hand and reported for duty at the national seminar the next month.

My job was to teach those who stopped by our booth in the Exhibit Hall to make memory pillows. Over the course of the next two hours, the chairs were constantly filled with people sharing their stories of loss - be it their child, their spouse, their parent, their friend, their partner, their "someone."

Having lost loved ones myself, including a daughter, a brother, and a "someone," I was touched by the stories. When my two hour commitment was finished I continued to sit and listen and watch as children came up to meet their mothers, grandmothers, sisters, and aunts. I knew I had found something special.

After a while, I found a TAPS staff member and asked what else I could do to help. I was kept busy the rest of the day... and the next. On my way home that evening I stopped in the lobby to spend a moment with one of the TAPS comfort dogs. I sat down on the floor and the beautiful golden lab climbed onto my lap, full of wiggles and kisses.

In a moment's time a young TAPS survivor came and joined me. He introduced himself and told me about his family. As he was petting the dog he edged closer and closer



*Thank You
Ann!*

until I thought he would end up on my lap too. That was okay; I have a big lap. He asked my name and I told him. Then he looked at me and asked in words I will never forget, "Miss Ann, why did my daddy choose to go to war and die? Didn't he love me enough to stay home?" Tears were running down his face and mine, too.

I was raised in a household where questions are never ignored, so I explained

to this beautiful young boy that I would find someone who could answer his question. He wouldn't have it. He said, "I want *you* to tell me, Miss Ann." Still sitting there on the lobby floor of hotel, I gathered him onto my lap and gave him a hug. I told him I didn't know why his father had died, but that I knew it was *not* because he didn't love him. I explained that it was because his dad loved him so very much that he wanted to help make the world the best it could be for him, his brother and sisters, his mom, grandparents, and friends.

Even today I can still recall that little body trembling on my lap, smiling a watery smile, a smile that lit up my heart. That night I slept the best I had in years. I returned to the seminar the next day and helped by running errands and doing whatever else was needed. By the end of the seminar I knew I had found my home.

Over the past five years, TAPS has become a very important part of my life. The way I see it, I might someday leave the DC area. But will I leave TAPS? Not as long as I breathe. ★

~Ann

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
TAPS welcomes new volunteers. To find out more about how you can help, email us at volunteer@taps.org or visit us at www.taps.org. Click on Get Involved and then navigate to Volunteer Central. From there you can explore volunteer jobs, sign up, and take our online training course.



Faces of TAPS

from the **T★A★P★S** 17th Annual

NATIONAL Military Survivor Seminar & Good Grief Camp for Young Survivors

Memorial Day Weekend

May 27 to 30, 2011

Washington, DC

Photos for Faces of TAPS by:

Don Chapman, Ricky Green, Will O'Neal, Denice Rankin, Jackie Ross,
Tony Steele, Crystal Sullivan, and Diana Wright



*TAPS is a family whose common bond is that we each loved
a hero who died while serving in the military. Each year we gather
during our nation's time of remembrance to honor our loved ones
and remember their lives. Our motto is:*

*Remember the Love,
Celebrate the Life, Share the Journey*



Faces of TAPS

2011 National Military Survivor Seminar
& Good Grief Camp for Young Survivors



Each year for Memorial Day weekend we converge on our nation's capital, this year from as close as Alexandria, Virginia and as far away as Sri Lanka. We come by ones and twos and sixes. We come by car, by bus, or by plane, arriving on two legs, four legs, or wheels. We come in all sizes, shapes, and colors. We represent all ages from infants to octogenarians. We are as diverse as America itself. We are a family. We are TAPS.







Faces of TAPS

2011 National Military Survivor Seminar
& Good Grief Camp for Young Survivors



Together we create a safe place to rest and renew ourselves on our journey. TAPS is a haven where we can laugh or cry without judgment, find new friends, and learn to cope with grief. As the weekend unfolds we find time to speak and to listen, to teach and to learn, to work and to play, to climb a tree, hop on a Harley, paint a face, create a collage, dance, sing, heal...







Faces of TAPS

2011 National Military Survivor Seminar
& Good Grief Camp for Young Survivors



We find comfort in one another and in those who come alongside us because they honor our loved ones and care deeply about us. We find warmth in a snuggly blanket and connection in sharing a hug or joining in a game of “Duck, Duck, Goose” with the Army’s Chief of Staff, General Martin Dempsey. We find meaning in joining in a walk of remembrance on the National Mall, launching a balloon message to our loved one, or introducing our newest members to our highest ranking military officer, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen.







Faces of TAPS

2011 National Military Survivor Seminar
& Good Grief Camp for Young Survivors

We draw near to each other as we honor and remember our loved ones on Memorial Day. We are a family. We are TAPS.

Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
“For many people, Memorial Day marks the beginning of summer, but for millions of American families it holds a much deeper meaning. It is that day we set aside solemnly to remember the brave who did not make it home, to celebrate their courage, mourn their loss, and appreciate what they did to make this country a safer place.”

Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense

“As I come to the end of my time in this post, I know this will be my final opportunity to stand and speak in this hallowed place and pay tribute to the fallen. It is up to us to be worthy of their sacrifice—in the decisions we make, the priorities we set, the support we provide to troops, veterans, and their families. For the rest of my life, I will keep these brave patriots and their loved ones in my heart and in my prayers.”

Barack Obama, President of the United States

“We remember that it is their courage, their unselfishness, their devotion to duty that has sustained this country through all its trials and will sustain us through all the trials to come. We remember that the blessings we enjoy as Americans came at a dear cost; that our very presence here today, as free people in a free society, bears testimony to their enduring legacy.”



Books for Children

The Healing Book: Facing the Death – & Celebrating the Life – of Someone You Love

By Ellen Sabin

Ellen Sabin wrote *The Healing Book: Facing the Death – and Celebrating the Life – of Someone You Love* for her nieces and nephews when her family faced several deaths in one summer. She says she also wrote it for her siblings who were walking a tightrope as they faced their grief while hoping to comfort and protect their children. Finally, she wrote it for herself as a way to feel the loss, express it, and allocate time to recall her love, experiences, and life with those family members.

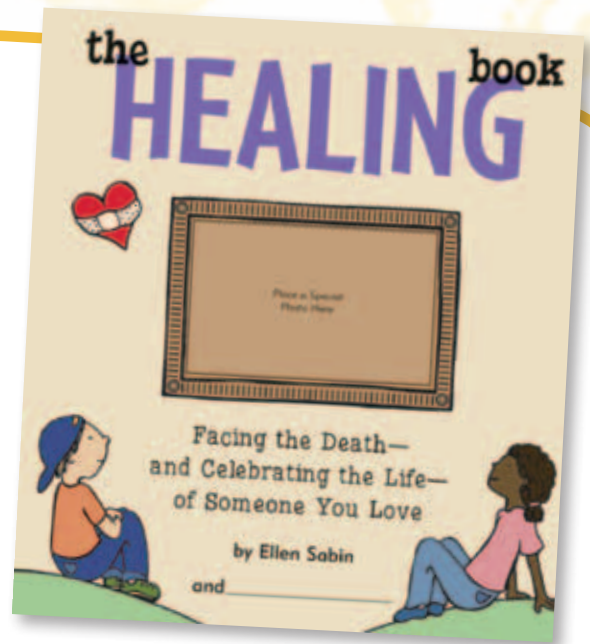
The Healing Book: Facing the Death – and Celebrating the Life – of Someone You Love is a hardcover activity and memory book designed for children who have survived the death of someone close. It can help children explore their feelings of grief and express them openly in a healthy manner. When completed, it can be a beautiful keepsake that the child can treasure all his life.

Written for children ages six to thirteen, the book is exceptionally insightful, honoring our individual differences in grieving while allowing the child to feel included among those who grieve. It's written in plain language that kids can understand using words like *death* and *died*, rather than euphemisms like *passed on* or *lost*,

to explain the complex and sometimes frightening aspects of grief.

The 64-page book covers such topics as emotions, questions, remembering, expressing, and ways to feel better. There is plenty of space for the child's own thoughts and remembrances, which can lead to continuing discussions and open conversations. It gives children a place to focus their feelings and energy while also providing ideas and activities to make them feel better when they are sad or confused. The format is simple, with plenty of colorful illustrations. You can see sample pages and learn more about *The Healing Book* at wateringcanpress.com.

One mother wrote, "My daughter (age 6) has been enjoying the book. Tuesday morning we went through it together and she was so excited to get started. She has clipped a pen to it and is carrying it around—even took it to school yesterday in her backpack. She is working through it very thoughtfully, and she continues to amaze me with her courage and faith. She actually asked me if I thought her brother (age 11) would work on their books together as she wanted to read through out loud and remember things



with him. He was receptive to that idea and I think it may help him with some of the dialogue he has internalized." *

The Healing Book: Facing the Death - and Celebrating the Life - of Someone You Love is a recipient of the prestigious Mom's Choice Award. It can be purchased at wateringcanpress.com. For tips on talking to your child about death, see our feature article by Ellen Sabin on page 36: *Healthy Coping Strategies for Grieving Children and Parents*.



Gala Honors T★A★P★S Supporters

Washington, DC - April 6, 2011

By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service

Crystal Becker felt lost when her husband, Army Staff Sgt. Shane R. Becker, died when his unit came under enemy attack near Baghdad in April 2007. She knew she would eventually come to terms with her grief, but feared for her two daughters—a 7-year-old whose world revolved around her daddy and a newborn who could never know him.

Becker found her solace in the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, or TAPS, a program committed to providing emotional support and services to grieving military families. She and her girls have become regulars at TAPS Military Survivor Seminars and Good Grief Camps as they share their feelings with other military families struggling with their own loss.

“You could offer my daughter Disney World or Disneyland and she would say no, she wants to go to TAPS,” Becker said of her oldest daughter, Cierra, now age 11. “We go every year, and every time there’s crying and pain and hurt. But it doesn’t overshadow the greatness that this new family we have found has to offer.”

Navy Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, joined Air Force Chief of Staff General Norton Schwartz and Veterans Affairs Secretary and former Army Chief of Staff Eric Shinseki in praising the program that has brought so much comfort to so many military families.

Speaking at TAPS annual Honor Guard Gala held at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium, Mullen called TAPS a “world-class organization that in so many ways sets the gold standard” in serving families struggling to deal with the loss of a loved one.



Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, delivers the keynote address at the TAPS Gala

Just returned from a trip to Boise, Idaho, where he and his wife, Deborah, met with 13 families of the fallen, Mullen said he asked a mother who had lost her son in Iraq what he could do to help. Her response was, “Please don’t ever forget... Please don’t let our country forget.”

“It is a reminder about our responsibility to those who have sacrificed so much for all of us— to say with emphasis, to make sure we absolutely never, ever forget their sacrifices,” Mullen told the group.

Mullen thanked Bonnie Carroll, president and founder of TAPS, the donors and

volunteers who help ensure its success and the surviving families with living up to that promise. “Thank you for remembering and moving forward with courage,” the chairman said.

Shinseki was honored with the annual TAPS Military Leadership Award for his lifetime commitment of supporting surviving families of the fallen while in uniform and now as VA secretary. Accepting the award on behalf of America’s veterans and the VA, Shinseki lauded the TAPS program for its support for families of the fallen, and the example these families provide.

“To the survivor families and their children, we are blessed to witness the quality of your strength, your grace, as you deal with the adjustments in your life,” Shinseki said. “You provide great motivation to all of us. Thank you for the model of strength and grace that you provide to all of us.”

Mullen, Shinseki, and Schwartz all held high praise for the late Senator Ted Stevens, the recipient of this year’s TAPS Congressional Award.



Admiral Mullen receiving appreciation award from survivor Cierra Becker



Honor Guard Gala Presenting Sponsors



Nashville recording artist, Barry Michael, with TAPS survivors



Stevens was a staunch supporter of military men and women, and he was instrumental in helping to establish TAPS in 1994, Carroll said.

In remembrance of that contribution, TAPS awarded the first annual TAPS Ted Stevens Leadership Award to a TAPS survivor, Lisa Dolan. Dolan is the widow of Navy Captain Bob Dolan Jr., who died during the September 11, 2001, attack on the Pentagon. Since her husband's death, Dolan has served as a peer mentor through TAPS, raised and trained therapy dogs to comfort grieving military children, and worked tirelessly to raise funds for the Pentagon's 9/11 Memorial.

"Lisa has been a true leader in the survivor community, and we are honored to recognize her efforts tonight," Carroll said.

The program concluded with a group of children from TAPS programs waving goodnight to the attendees as Nashville recording artist Barry Michael performed the original song, "Heroes and Angels."

The annual Honor Guard Gala raises funds to support TAPS programs, including peer-based emotional support, grief and trauma resources, case work assistance, and a 24/7 resource and information helpline for all who have been affected by a death in the armed forces. This year's gala raised a record \$1.1 million for TAPS programs and services. ★

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★ Photos by TAPS Photographer Jackie Ross and Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Chad McNeeley ★



Gala Chair Buzz Hefti, left, visits with Marie Campbell, Ron Spratt and Walt Havenstein



Secretary Shinseki receives award from survivor Terri Thibodeaux



Award recipient Lisa Dolan with Barry Michael



Healthy Kids Fun Run

A Growing Component of the TAPS Run and Remember Team

The year was 2004. The TAPS Run and Remember team had been tying up their shoelaces and running to honor their loved ones for the previous four years. For the first time, TAPS expanded the Run and Remember Team to include our TAPS children running the Marine Corps Marathon Healthy Kids Fun Run. "At that time everyone gathered at the Iwo Jima Memorial, and the children ran two laps around the Memorial. The race was open to 1,000 children. After the run there were healthy snacks available

for the children to choose from. My kids loved making their own granola," said Rosalie Horton, surviving spouse of Major Robert Horton and mom of two of our first Healthy Kids Fun Run participants, Carolyn and Tommy Horton.

Since that first race, the Fun Run has grown enormously, both for the Marine Corps Marathon and for TAPS. In 2010, six waves of children (more than 3,000 total) ran the one-mile course, now located in the North Parking Lot of the Pentagon. The TAPS runners numbered 24.

Each TAPS participant receives a t-shirt with the photo of the fallen hero they are honoring. Prerace warm-ups get the children moving, and the activity area features interactive challenges and games focusing on health and fitness. During the event, Marines run alongside and friends cheer from the sidelines, adding to the excitement and encouraging the runners. At the end of the race, all participants receive a Fun Run t-shirt, medal, and snacks. *

Here's what some of our past runners have to say:



Jayden Peterson, surviving son of Captain Justin Peterson, ran the race last year at the age of six. He has been talking about running it again since the race ended last year. "I like going to TAPS to hang out with the other kids who have a fallen soldier. I want other kids to be able to go, too, so I ran to raise money for TAPS. It was cool; I got to wear a shirt with daddy's picture on it!"

Cierra Becker, surviving daughter of Staff Sergeant Shane Becker, has run for the last two years, starting when she was nine years old. "I ran in honor of my daddy. He is my hero. He always played with me and, of course, always loved me. The run is special for me because my dad liked to run. While I ran, I thought about him and all the things he did for me. I know that he would have told me, 'You know, you did good,' because he always believed in me. I ran to remind myself just how much he did believe in me and why I should always believe in myself."



Zak Kazmar is the son of Marine First Sergeant Dustin Kazmar who has run the marathon for TAPS both in Iraq and in Washington, DC. Zak, age 6, ran the Healthy Kids Fun Run last year because his dad was unable to participate from Afghanistan. "I ran to raise money for TAPS and in honor of Brad [Army Specialist Bradley Beard] because he was a good person and so am I. I wish he was here so I could meet him."

Hannah Sweet, age 10, is the surviving niece of Sergeant Thomas Sweet, II, who died on Thanksgiving Day 2003. "On the day my uncle left for Iraq, I was the last person to get a hug and kiss from him before he was called to attention and marched off with his unit. He is my hero. I run because I don't want people to forget my Uncle TJ, and I like being with the other kids from TAPS."



Michael Wert ran in 2008 and 2009 following the death of his father, Master Sergeant Michael James Wert, in 2007. "I ran the Healthy Kids Fun run because I like to run, and so did my dad. The run was special to me because I ran it in memory of my dad."

Brooke Nyren, surviving daughter of Staff Sergeant Nathaniel Nyren, was nine years old when she first joined the team in 2005. "I started running in the Healthy Kids Fun Run to honor my father, my hero. Each run means something special because it was a time for me to honor my dad and because I was running with other kids who were there for the same reason. Two races that meant the most to me were when I ran hand in hand with my closest friends. We knew that together we could get through anything."



And what about those first two runners?

Carolyn Horton, now 19, continues to run and remember. She has completed the 10K several times and has set a goal to compete in the marathon at some point.

Tommy Horton, now 13, has also been running in memory of their dad since 2004. "I run in honor of my dad.

The Healthy Kids Fun Run is special because a lot of my friends run, too. When I am running, I think about three things but I think mostly about my dad, and then all the men and women who have died for this great country. The third thing I think about is finishing strong."



»» TAPS still has slots available for kids five to twelve years old who wish to run on SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29.

For complete information on how to join the team, visit www.taps.org or email run@taps.org.



The Emotional Journey through Grief

By Judy Tatelbaum, LCSW

When facing separation, loss, or death, we are invariably thrown into a turmoil of mixed and intense emotions. Some of these feelings may seem foreign or unexpected. Some are hard to bear. We may feel several different, sometimes conflicting, emotions all at once. We may expect to feel only sadness, but rarely is grief confined to a single emotion.

Besides experiencing a mix of feelings like sadness, anger, regret, longing, guilt, and loneliness, we may also experience mood swings. All of that intensity can feel unrelenting and frightening. We may even secretly wonder if we are going crazy. Grief at its most intense can feel that way, as we are

thrown off balance by trying to manage so many emotions all at once.

FEAR

The loss of a loved one is often traumatic and difficult to accept. One way we may respond is with fear. Our fears, anxiety, dark thoughts, and nightmares can make us question our mental stability, too. Yet

these are natural reactions to loss. Several widows have mentioned waking with panic feelings, which they had never experienced before. One woman started hyperventilating while entering a hospital where her husband had died. We must have compassion for ourselves when we have these very uncomfortable, yet natural, responses to loss. These feelings can be part of our emotional journey. If we need it, we may want to take antianxiety medication temporarily.

»» Allowing and expressing our feelings is what helps us move through them. Holding onto feelings causes them to persist.

FEAR
GUILT
LONELINESS
REGRET
ANGER

»The more we allow our feelings to be expressed, the more we will heal and move off of the emotional roller coaster of grief.

GUILT

Guilt is another common reaction after a loss. We want to rewrite the circumstances, as if our behavior could alter the terrible facts. These "if only's" keep us mired in grief. Hard as it is to remember, sometimes we are impotent to intervene or control life and death. Our guilt will dissipate when we can accept this reality.

REGRET

Having regrets is human nature. In every relationship there are things we did or didn't do, said or didn't say, that we regret after the relationship ends. It is essential to our healing that we have compassion for our errors or omissions. Regret and disappointment, like guilt, are feelings that we need to allow ourselves to experience and then release.

ANGER

A difficult feeling to face is anger at the one who is gone or at those who took the one we loved from us. For some, anger is an empowering emotion, preferable to the more vulnerable feelings of sadness and regret. Anger is natural when a loss or death occurs, regardless of who or what makes us angry. Allowing and expressing anger is healthy. Staying endlessly angry is not.

LONELINESS

Loneliness and longing can be difficult for us, too, as these feelings pull on our heartstrings and make us feel powerless. Of course we will miss the one we have lost.

Loneliness and longing for the person or for the life that preceded their disappearance is natural. However, at some point we must stop looking back at all we lost and look forward to whatever lies ahead.

PHYSICAL PROBLEMS

Our bodies, as well as our souls, react to the loss of a loved one. We may notice a lot of tension or frequent colds or aches and pains that we never had before. Sleep problems are also common for people who are grieving. It may help to understand that our loss impacts us deeply on every level, and even more important we need to know that these reactions are temporary.

WHERE TO GET HELP

Whenever we are uneasy with our grief feelings, we might be reassured by seeking the help of a grief therapist, especially if uncomfortable and intense feelings persist too long and disrupt our lives. Sadness and tears are healthy expressions of sorrow. But when our sadness intensifies into despair and depression or suicidal thoughts that we cannot seem to overcome, we should seek help from a professional counselor or therapist.

EXPRESSING FEELINGS

Not only do we question our sanity when we are brokenhearted, but we may wonder if we have what it takes to survive our painful loss. Allowing and expressing our feelings is what helps us move through them. Holding onto feelings causes them

to persist. Feelings expressed disappear. As we let go of our pain and sorrow, we begin to heal.

RELEASING FEELINGS

Releasing feelings means expressing them aloud, verbally and through tears, and also by writing them down. We need to distinguish, name, and examine each emotion. Then we might imagine our feelings as clouds or skywriting that pass in front of us and then disappear. We might picture putting all our expressed feelings into an imaginary balloon which we tie tightly and release into the sky or seal into a plastic bag and place the bag in the trash. However we do it, it's important to see that our feelings are not permanent.

We need to trust that grief is a process that lessens our pain over time. Most of all, we must trust that we have untapped abilities to heal, untapped courage to survive this painful time. We must remind ourselves that we can and will recover. The more we allow our feelings to be expressed, the more we will heal and move off of the emotional roller coaster of grief. Remember we can love the one we lost forever, but we need not be in pain forever to express that love. ✧

About the Author



Judy Tatelbaum, LCSW, is a psychotherapist who specializes in grief and author of the books, *The Courage to Grieve* and *You Don't Have to Suffer*. Other grief related articles are on her website: www.judytatelbaum.com. She can be reached by email at: jtmiracle@comcast.net

»» Most of all, we must trust that we have untapped abilities to heal, untapped courage to survive this painful time.



Traumatic Grief

Are you at risk for post traumatic stress?

By Jill Harrington LaMorie, MSW, LCSW, DSW

Imagine driving down the street and crossing an intersection. You glance quickly left and right, but out of nowhere you are hit by an oncoming vehicle. The impact is painful, crushing, debilitating. It takes your breath away and spirals you out of control for what seems like an eternity. Spinning, spinning, spinning, you finally come to a stop and have the sudden realization that you have survived.

Time stands still; everything around you is in slow motion. You have difficulty breathing. You are confused, disoriented, dazed. You feel numb. Even though others have circled around you, you feel alone and afraid. You look down and see that you are wounded, but can't tell how vast or deep those wounds may be. Anxiety overwhelms you.

You look around and the world you knew just minutes ago is infinitely different; changed, unknown, untrustworthy. You search for something you had with you before the accident and it's no longer there. You become frantic, not wanting to accept that what is lost may be gone forever. You try to pick yourself up but the heaviness in your heart weighs you down. You make it part way, but you realize that you need to reach out your hand and get support.

In the aftermath of the sudden or violent death of a loved one, feeling traumatized and grief-stricken are common reactions for survivors. Just like the sudden, violent car crash described above, the impact of a traumatic death has been described by survivors as feeling like being broadsided.

In the past decade we have begun to recognize and better understand individuals, families, and communities that have been affected by elements of both grief and trauma. As the bereaved try to heal and repair their lives after a sudden violent death, they (and those around them) may expect that grief will be the usual natural reaction to the death of a loved one. Most are not aware that death by traumatic means qualifies as a traumatic stressor and

leaves the survivor more vulnerable to post traumatic stress in addition to grief.

While all deaths may have an element of personal trauma, the nature and circumstances of the death are significant factors in traumatic grief. Sudden or violent deaths, such as those caused by accident, suicide, homicide, acute sudden illness, disaster, or war, readily qualify as traumatic stressors. So also does the death of a child of any age. When the death is sudden or untimely, it offers no opportunity for emotional or psychological preparation for the loss. Circumstances involving violent or stigmatized deaths can leave survivors at risk for developing post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and complications in their grief.

If you are the survivor of a traumatic death, you may be experiencing trauma symptoms. It is important to understand that there is a relationship between trauma and grief and that you may be experiencing both at the same time. Trauma can overlap grief, meaning that you may be experiencing trauma symptoms in addition to the normal reactions of grief. If left unaddressed trauma impairs grief work and can interfere with the survivor's ability to understand and

accept the reality of their loved one's death—an essential first task in the ability to begin to heal.

Traumatic death survivors can often feel "stuck" or "frozen in time." Sudden, untimely, or violent deaths produce circumstances in which post traumatic stress responses take emotional priority in managing the

It is important to understand that there is a relationship between trauma and grief and that you may be experiencing both at the same time. Trauma can overlap grief, meaning that you may be experiencing trauma symptoms in addition to the normal reactions of grief.





overwhelming loss, horror, and profound sense of helplessness. Trying to cope with these post trauma symptoms becomes the first priority rather than working on normal expressions of grief, and the survivor's ability to grieve can be delayed.

Dealing with the dual affects of both grief and trauma can be an overwhelming experience for survivors who deal with, and alternate between, conflicting sets of thoughts, feelings, and reactions. It may take months or years for traumatic death survivors to truly begin to work on their grief.

RECOGNIZING THE SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of post traumatic stress can be horrifying and often times debilitating, interfering with your ability to manage daily activities and get through the day. The symptoms can begin soon after a traumatic event or even years later. If these symptoms persist for several months or cause you great distress, you may be experiencing PTSD:

- ◆ **Re-living or re-experiencing the traumatic event.** This may be indicated by painful, intrusive thoughts or nightmares about the death. You may feel like you are going through the death or notification over and over again in your mind. These are called flashbacks. There may be a trigger such as a sight, sound, or smell that causes you to relive the event, such as going back to where the death occurred, hearing gunfire, smelling the cologne or perfume your loved one used to wear, or seeing a person in a military uniform.
- ◆ **Avoidance of reminders of the person or event.** This can include staying away from activities, places, or things related to your loved one or his death. You may find yourself avoiding people once associated with him or her. You may not want to talk about your loved one. You may avoid visiting military installations or watching movies that have military scenes in them. You may keep yourself very busy, distracting yourself with many projects. You may also avoid seeking help.

- ◆ **Feeling numb and detached.** This may be another way to avoid feelings or memories. You may not be able to remember elements about the traumatic event or talk about them. You may lack any interest in activities you once enjoyed or avoid relationships which require you to try and feel positive emotions.

- ◆ **Hyperarousal.** This can include feeling keyed-up or having persistent anxiety which may cause "the jitters," difficulty sleeping, trouble concentrating, feeling always on guard, and startling easily.

PTSD and complications in bereavement can impair your health, well-being, and functioning, as well as delaying your ability to begin on a journey of healing.

WHEN IS IT A GOOD IDEA TO SEEK TREATMENT AND SUPPORT?

Some of the following experiences may suggest that professional support is needed:

- ◆ The intensity of your trauma and grief symptoms persists intensely and acutely for more than six months or interferes with your ability to care for yourself and others, hold a job, or gain employment.
- ◆ You continue to experience intense yearning that does not diminish over time and have difficulty accepting the death.
- ◆ You become severely depressed, hopeless about the future, and have difficulty experiencing any positive feeling.
- ◆ You experience persistent feelings of guilt, shame, hopelessness, and despair.
- ◆ You begin to experience significant relationship difficulties.
- ◆ You engage in risk-seeking behavior.
- ◆ You abuse alcohol, drugs, or other substances (including prescription medications or nicotine).
- ◆ You harbor persistent suicidal thoughts.

Effective treatment and comforting support is available to those suffering from the

impact of a sudden, traumatic loss. There are a variety of interventions available, including individual psychotherapy, group counseling, peer support groups, cognitive-behavioral therapies, complicated grief therapy, and medication therapies. Information about the latest treatments for PTSD can be found on the Department of Veterans Affairs website at www.ptsd.va.gov.

It is important that survivors who have experienced traumatic grief find a counselor or therapist who is experienced in working with both trauma and bereavement as a dual process. For help connecting with a counselor in your local area, call TAPS at 800-959-TAPS (8277) or email jessica@taps.org. TAPS connects you with individual counseling through programs that offer free, unlimited counseling such as the VA's Vet Centers and Give an Hour. ★

About the Author



Jill LaMorie is the surviving spouse of Navy Lieutenant Commander Andrew LaMorie and the proud mother of their children, Madeline and Alexander. She served as the TAPS Director of Professional Education for more than two years, as well as being a peer mentor, group facilitator, and workshop presenter. Jill recently completed her Doctorate in Social Work at The University of Pennsylvania, studying Military Death and the Impact to Survivors. She brings more than sixteen years of experience in working with people living with life-challenging illness, trauma, grief, and loss.



T★A★P★S Casework Assistance

By Melissa LoFaso, Manager TAPS Casework Assistance

Everywhere you turn, you hear people talking about your “path to healing” and “healthy grieving.” But sometimes you are too concerned about making it through the basic daily struggles to even think about taking care of your emotional needs. When you are worried about how to pay for dental care for your child, how to begin the process of getting your baby’s father on the birth certificate, or how to choose between keeping the lights on or feeding your family, your long-term healing can take a lower priority.

The TAPS casework team is here to help you navigate those concerns and get you to a place where you can start to think about healing again. We are here for you. Our caseworkers are available to listen to your concerns and guide you through your questions surrounding healthcare, education, benefits, financial stress, legal issues, and more.

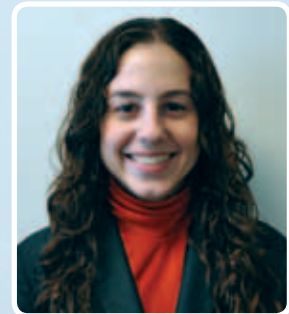
HERE ARE SOME OF THE WAYS WE CAN HELP

- ★ Connect you to local pro bono attorneys as they are available
- ★ Guide you through your benefits questions and ensure you are in touch with the right people to guarantee you are getting the benefits your loved one earned and provided for you
- ★ Connect you with experts at TRICARE and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to get you and your children set up with the appropriate health care
- ★ Contact organizations on your behalf that fulfill requests for financial assistance
- ★ Provide you with updated information on federal, state, and private education scholarships as well as connect you with experts who can provide you with all the information you need to know about school tuition for both you and your children
- ★ Research a variety of responses to needs as they come up on a case-by-case basis

There is no straight path to healing. Each person’s journey is bumpy, with obstacles throwing you off track just when you thought you were making progress. This is normal, and usually you can get yourself back on track by reaching out to those around you, looking internally, and turning to whatever source of support is most meaningful for you. It’s the big road blocks, though, that can cause you to ignore your emotional needs or tuck them away to deal with at a later date when you find the time. There is a way to break through the blocks while allowing yourself to grieve, and we are here to help you figure out how. ★

To talk with one of our caseworkers, call us at 800-959-8277 and ask for Melissa LoFaso or send an email to melissa@taps.org.

About the Author



Melissa LoFaso joined TAPS as the Casework Assistance Manager, in 2009. She oversees the casework department, which facilitates answers to all surviving family member questions involving benefits, burials, financial concerns, and any related issues. Melissa is a nationally certified counselor and holds a master’s degree in education and human development, specializing in Clinical Mental Health Counseling with a focus on grief and trauma.

T★A★P★S Online Community

By Ellen Andrews, Manager, TAPS Online Community

"I owe my all to TAPS and those who travelled this road ahead of me, as they were the ones who pulled me through. The chats give me peace and I hope to give peace to others. It's been a rocky road for all of us, and I am better today because of TAPS." ~ TAPS survivor and chat room participant Linda Bishop



We can often feel isolated as we face each day in our unexpected "new" life. We crave connection and the company of those who have shared our experience. We search for kindred spirits that can provide a listening ear, a gentle touch, an understanding heart; people with whom we can find a sense of calm in an otherwise chaotic life.

TAPS offers ongoing connection through our online community, linking us each and every day for sharing our grief, our challenges, our hopes, and our loved ones. Within the online community, there are different venues to meet the needs and comfort levels of our family of survivors.

★ Chat rooms provide real time conversations each week in a supportive environment. Our general discussion chats are open to all survivors. We also have monthly sessions that are focused on specific relationships including parents, siblings, spouses, and suicide survivors.

★ Peer group sites on Yahoo offer ongoing connections in a message board format. You can post and read messages anytime, as well as share photos and special days. Whether you just read what others post or you actively post yourself, you will gain strength and support from the others in the groups.

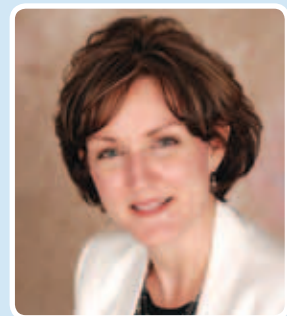
★ The message board topic forums allow you to share with others on a variety of subjects including anniversaries and special dates, coping for the long term, things people say, sharing experiences at TAPS events, and our weekly Saturday

morning messages. You can subscribe to receive postings from all topics or just those that are of interest to you.

Join us in the TAPS Online Community. Whether you are new to the grief journey, or you are several years down the road, we are here for you! Reach out whenever you need and find a companion, a shoulder to lean on, and a friend. ★

To find out more about the Online Community and to register for access, visit our website at www.taps.org and click on Online Community. We are here for you 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you ever feel you need to speak to someone urgently, please contact TAPS at 800-959-TAPS(8277).

About the Author



Ellen has served as the Online Community Manager for TAPS since 2008. In this capacity, she oversees and moderates chat rooms, message boards, and forums. She also contributes to and serves on the editorial board for TAPS Magazine. Ellen draws on her own personal experience to assist others. She was engaged to Navy Lieutenant David J. Huber, who was killed in an aviation accident shortly before their wedding in 1995.

The support offered in the chat rooms, peer groups, and message boards are peer based: survivors reaching out and connecting with survivors in a gentle, supportive, and caring atmosphere. The TAPS Online Community is not intended as a substitute for medical advice or treatment by a medical professional or clinical counselor. It can be used in addition to family and friends to form a strong support network.

Healthy Coping Strategies For Grieving Children and Parents

By Ellen Sabin, MPH, MPA

Parents with young children dealing with the loss of a loved one face a particularly difficult challenge working through their own grief while simultaneously trying to help their children deal with death and loss. No one is prepared to help their children grieve. Tools and conversation-starters have great value in guiding families toward healthy coping strategies.

The tips that follow are meant to help you to help your child and yourself:

- Explain what “grieving” is to your child: that all of the different feelings in their heart, head, and body are parts of grieving and that they are normal and part of the process. Without such understanding many children feel confused by their emotions and fears.
- Let your child know that they might have many different thoughts and feelings and that they are all okay.
- Allow your children to see you sad, happy, angry, lonely, and know that it is okay for you to feel the range of emotions you will feel.
- Explain that talking about feelings, asking questions, and remembering the person who died can help them feel better. Let them know that they can talk to you.
- Be willing to hear and discuss your children’s feelings and allow them to talk about the person who died. Recalling memories might have great value to one child while others might not be ready to talk about the person. Be conscious of their prompts.

- Let your children know that it’s okay to talk about and remember good things as well as not-so-good things. They might ask you to tell them stories of family activities or remind them about the person. If prompted by a child to recall the person, consider creating a memory-book with photos and memories.

- Go at your child’s pace in addressing questions and once they ask you, be willing and prepared to answer them honestly and directly. Some children will ask about how or why someone died, the rituals around the funeral, where the person went, what else will change in their lives, etc. Questions often express fears, uncertainty, and concerns, so answering them will help comfort your child.

- Tell your child it is okay to talk to other adults or friends. Expanding their support circle is a gift in general, but is particularly valuable when children see their parent’s grief and might want to avoid upsetting them, thereby delaying or avoiding their own healing process.

- Talk about ways you try to feel better when you are feeling sad. Let them know that they can come up with ideas for themselves, as well. This will empower them to feel a measure of control and learn skills that might help them in other life challenges.

- Take care of yourself - talk to friends, family, or a professional; think of things that make you feel better; keep a journal and spend time with your children doing things that make you and them happy. *

»» EDITOR’S NOTE: *Ellen is the author of The Healing Book: Facing the Death - and Celebrating the Life - of Someone You Love. Our TAPS Book Shelf review appears on page 25 of this issue.*



Traumatic Grief in Military Children

Excerpt from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Like adults, children and teens may feel intense sadness and loss, or grief, when a person close to them dies. And like adults, children and teens express their grief in how they behave, what they think and say, and how they feel emotionally and physically. Each child and parent grieves differently, and there is no right or wrong way or length of time to grieve.

Some grief reactions cut across children's developmental levels, and children may show their grief in many different ways. For example, bereaved children or teens of any age may sleep or cry more than usual. They may regress and return to earlier behaviors, or they may develop new fears or problems in school. They may complain about aches and pains. They may be angry and irritable, or they may become withdrawn and isolate themselves from family and friends.

The reactions of some children and teens to the death of a parent or someone close to them may be more intense than the common deep sadness and upset of grief. In childhood traumatic grief, children develop symptoms associated with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). [See Table 1 on the reverse side of this page for examples of common and traumatic grief reactions at various ages.]

Children of military families may be more likely to experience these more intense

reactions if, for example, the death was sudden or traumatic, if it occurred under terrifying circumstances, or if the child witnessed or learned of horrific details surrounding the death. Also, although post traumatic stress reactions may occur after a deployed parent has been killed in combat, symptoms can also appear when death comes weeks or months after an initial combat injury, even if the death has been anticipated by the child or by adults in the child's life.

Not all children who experience the death of someone special under traumatic circumstances develop traumatic grief. However, in some cases, children may develop symptoms of PTSD that interfere with their ability to grieve and to call up comforting memories of the person who died. Traumatic grief may also interfere with everyday activities such as being with friends and doing schoolwork.

PTSD Symptoms in Children With Traumatic Grief Can Include:

★ Reliving aspects of the person's death or having intrusive thoughts, for example, experiencing nightmares about the death, not being able to stop thinking about how the person died, imagining how much the person suffered, or imagining rescuing the person and reversing the outcome.

★ Avoiding reminders of the death or of the person who died, for example, by

avoiding pictures of the deceased person or news about the military, by not visiting the cemetery, by not wanting to remember or talk about the person, or by feeling emotionally numb.

★ Increased arousal, being nervous and jumpy or having trouble sleeping, having poor concentration, being irritable or angry, being "on alert," being easily startled, and developing new fears.

In general, if it becomes apparent that your child or teen is having very upsetting memories, avoiding activities or feelings, or experiencing physical, emotional, or learning problems, he or she may be having a traumatic grief reaction. You may wish to seek help or counseling for your child or teen if grief reactions seem to continue without any relief, if they appear for the first time after an initial period of relative calm, if they get worse, or if they interfere with your child's being with friends, going to school, or enjoying activities. ★

To read the complete article, visit www.nctsn.org and click on Military Children & Families.

Photos, TAPS archives

National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2008). Traumatic Grief in Military Children: Information for Families. Los Angeles, CA & Durham, NC: National Center for Child Traumatic Stress.



CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF DEATH & REACTIONS TO GRIEF

Age	Understanding of Death	Common Grief Reactions	Traumatic Grief Reactions
<p>PRESCHOOL & YOUNG CHILDREN</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not understand that death is final. May think that they will see the person again or that the person can come back to life. May think it was their fault that the person died. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May become upset when their routines change. May get worried or fussy when apart from their usual caregivers and may be clingy and want extra attention. May express fears, sadness, and confusion by having nightmares or tantrums, being withdrawn, or regressing to earlier behaviors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May repetitively engage in play about the death or the person who died. May have problems getting back on schedule or meeting developmental milestones. May have difficulty being comforted.
<p>SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gradually gain a more mature understanding of death. Begin to realize that death is final and that people do not come back to life. May have scary beliefs about death, like believing in the "boogey man" who comes for the person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May ask lots of questions about how the person died and about what death means. May display distress and sadness in ways that are not always clear, like being irritable and easily angered. May avoid spending time with others. May have physical complaints (headaches, stomachaches). May have trouble sleeping. May have problems at school. May have no reaction at all. May dream events related to the death or war. May want to call home during the school day. May reject old friends and seek new friends who have experienced a similar loss. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May repeatedly talk or play about the death. May have nightmares about the death. May become withdrawn, hide feelings (especially guilt), avoid talking about the person, or about places and/or things related to the death. May avoid reminders of the person (for example, may avoid watching TV news, may refuse to attend the funeral or visit the cemetery). May become jumpy, extra-alert, or nervous. May have difficulty concentrating on homework or class work, or may suffer decline in grades. May worry excessively about their health, their parents' health, or the health and safety of other people. May act out and become "class clown" or "bully."
<p>TEENS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a full adult understanding of death. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May have similar grief reactions to those of school-age children when at home, with friends, and at school. May withdraw, become sad, or lose interest in activities. May act out, have trouble in school, or engage in risky behavior. May feel guilt and shame related to the death. May worry about the future. May hide their true feelings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May have similar traumatic grief reactions to those of school-age children when at home, with friends, and at school. May avoid interpersonal and social situations such as dating. May use drugs or alcohol to deal with negative feelings related to the death. May talk of wanting to harm themselves and express thoughts of revenge or worries about the future. May have low self-esteem because they feel that their family is now "different" or because they feel different from their peers.





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Big Wild Life Runs

Anchorage, AK ★ Sunday, August 21, 2011

Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon

Virginia Beach, VA ★ Sunday, September 4, 2011

Army Ten-Miler

Washington, DC ★ Sunday, October 9, 2011

Marine Corps Marathon, 10K, & Healthy Kids Fun Run

Washington, DC

Saturday, October 29, 2011 - Sunday, October 30, 2011

Rock 'n' Roll Marathon & Half Marathon

San Antonio, TX ★ Sunday, November 13, 2011

